

SITE COORDINATORS' SURVEY

MAY 2004

SURVEY RESULTS

Background

On May 10, 2004 a survey was electronically submitted to all Air Pollution Distance Learning Network Site Coordinators. The completion of the survey was requested at the request of a small workgroup of Site Coordinators who volunteered to try to determine why the attendance at the annual APDLN conference held in San Diego, CA March 1-2, 2004 was so low. As part of the survey, the workgroup promised to provide all Site Coordinators with the results of the survey. Because of the many varied responses to the survey, a simple tabulation of the results was impossible. This workgroup decided on providing you with an "Executive Summary" instead and providing you the opportunity to view all of the responses in the final report on the Site Coordinators' Resource web site.

Survey Results

All Site Coordinators can read the entire survey responses at EPA's Site Coordinators Resource Center web site (www.epa.gov/air/oaqps/eog/apti/admin.html). However, below is a synopsis of the responses.

- The job title of the site coordinators varied tremendously with the greatest response being an Administrative Support to the least being an Assistant Director.
- Site Coordinators have been in their positions for as little as a few months to as many as over 10 years. One to two years seem to be the mean.
- The survey, as expected, did reveal that the role/responsibilities of a Site Coordinator is only one of many responsibilities held by a Site Coordinator.
- Only 7 of the 89 responses received indicated they attended the March 2004 APDLN conference in San Diego. However, 28 responded that they would have liked to attend. Thirty-five responded that they did not want to attend and the 26 remaining basically did not answer the question.
- Fifty-one or 57% of those responding to the survey indicated they have never attended an APDLN conference. Eighteen or 20% responded they have only attended one with the balance responding from attended 2 to up to 10.
- Of importance to the survey was the question having to do with why they did not attend. The response most received was the lack of a "perceived value" in the

conference. Twenty-three of the 89 responded as their reason. The next significant response was “budget constraints” prevented them from attending.

- When asked for the reasons for not attending past conferences, the responses were similar as to why the 2004 conference was not attended: 26 coordinators responded that the conference had “no perceived value” and 13 responded that cost was prohibitive. What was a surprise was that 28 coordinators didn’t answer the question at all. Understandably, some may not have been in the role of Site Coordinator.
- Question 4 was a multi question having to do with “conference planning”. Specifically, the questions asked what you thought the conference agenda should include; ways to improve the conference; what would motivate you to attend. There were just about as many different responses to each of these questions as there were respondents. Some of the comments were troubling to the small volunteer workgroup. The workgroup decided to follow-up on a one-on-one to get some additional clarifications on some of the responses. Once again, you can view the individual responses online.
- Question 5 was another multi-part question related to role of the site coordinator and your understanding of that role and your responsibilities. There were really no surprises to the responses with the exception of the one portion having to do with the knowledge of and the usefulness of the relatively new “Site Coordinator’s Resource Center” web site. Almost as many site coordinators have not made use of the resource center as have. It was surprising that 12% responded that they have no need to use it. Comments received about the site have, for the most part, have been very positive.
- Although also portion of Question 5, we wanted to address this portion of the question having to do with participation in the quarterly site coordinators’ conference call. More coordinators responded they do not participate than responded they have or normally do. The comments related to why coordinators do not participate were of interest. The comments that can be addressed are currently being examined and corrected.
- Question 6 related to “site usage” and the best and worst attended broadcasts. For the most part, the majority of the respondents indicated that the Air Toxics Now broadcasts were well attended.
- Question 7 had to do with communication with EPA and ways to improving those lines of communications. There were numerous comments that are too numerous to mention here but may be viewed online. The committee will be working closely with EPA to address the comments that are felt to be legitimate and able to be corrected as much as possible.

Recommendations:

- The workgroup will follow-up with some of the site coordinators on a one-on-one to ensure we fully understand the comments made and determine how we can improve on the “perceived value” of the conference.
- The workgroup feels that a conference should still be conducted in 2005 but are looking at a different media and very much-curtailed meeting. This could be a “satellite broadcast” just for site coordinators or even a web-based broadcast if possible. Site coordinators could also attend the conference live. This is in its infancy stage of discussion.
- The workgroup will look into ways to better communicate with all of the site coordinators on a regular basis and how to better present the quarterly conference calls.
- Although involved with the same activity, training of air quality staff, the workgroup will look into whether the site coordinators and the Stappa/Alapco/EPA Joint Training Committee should divorce themselves and have their own discreet meetings. It seems the general consensus is that the Joint Training Committee keep the site coordinators informed of any training activities being planned and also confer with site coordinators as appropriate.
- The workgroup needs to better promote/market the importance of the role of the site coordinators, not only to the coordinators directly, but also to their management.
- The workgroup must “evaluate” its progress and see if improvements have been achieved. This could be accomplished through another survey a year or two from now.

We, the undersigned site coordinators’ workgroup, would like to thank each of you who have provided valuable feedback to us through your responses to the survey. We will not take your responses lightly and we will pursue, to our capability, ways to improve the site coordinators’ conference and in general, the way we do our job in this capacity. Without proper and adequate training, our staff will not be capable of performing the quality jobs they must do. It is our responsibility to provide the air quality staff with the means to receive the training they need. Thank you so much for your time and efforts in this endeavor and feel free to contact any of us should you have further comments. We will continue to work towards making this better for all of you.